

“If my voice is powerful enough to stop the rain, what else can it do?”

Renee Watson, *Harlem’s Little Blackbird*

“If my voice can take me around the world, what else can it do?”

Renee Watson, *Harlem’s Little Blackbird*

“If they can’t go *in there*, I’m staying out here!”

Renee Watson, *Harlem’s Little Blackbird*

“...we cannot forget the adaptability of the enslaved. They were not allowed to learn to read and write, but they needed to tell their story and remember their history.”

Nikki Giovanni, *Hip Hop Speaks to Children*

“I’m divine and my mind expands throughout the universe.”

Queen Latifah

“Your moment in history is right now! Don’t be afraid to let it shine. My Umi said shine your light on the world.”

Mos Def

“We ask ourselves, ‘who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?’ Actually, who are you not to be?”

Marianne Williamson

“Musicians want to be the loud voice for so many quiet hearts.”

Billy Joel

“If you hear a voice within you that says ‘you cannot paint,’ then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced.”

Vincent Van Gogh

“The one thing that you have that nobody else has is you. Your voice, your mind, your story, your vision. So write and draw and build and play and dance and live as only you can.”

Neil Gaiman

“I decided it is better to scream. Silence is the real crime against humanity.”

Nadezhda Mandelstam

“When people don’t express themselves, they die one piece at a time.”

Laurie Halse Anderson, *Speak*

“If you are silent about your pain, they’ll kill you and say you enjoyed it.”

Zora Neale Hurston

“The exhilarating ripple of her voice was a wild tonic in the rain.”

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

“Do the other kids make fun of you? For how you talk?

Sometimes.

So why don’t you do something about it? You could learn to talk differently, you know.

But this is my voice. How would you be able to tell when I was talking?”

-Lauren Oliver, *Before I Fall*

“When you’re drowning you don’t think, ‘I would be incredibly pleased if someone would notice I’m drowning and come and rescue me.’ You just scream.”

-John Lennon

“What is genius but the power of expressing a new individuality?”

Elizabeth Browning

“I was never more hated than when I tried to be honest. Or when, even as just now I’ve tried to articulate exactly what I felt to be the truth. No one was satisfied.”

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

“I do not know if all cops are poets, but I know that all cops carry guns with triggers.”

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

“My words fly up, my thoughts remain below: Words without thoughts never to heaven go.”

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

“I hold my peace, sir? no;

No, I will speak as liberal as the north;

Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,

All, all, cry shame against me, yet I’ll speak.”

William Shakespeare, *Othello*

“If writers were too wise, perhaps no books would get written at all. It might be better to ask yourself ‘Why?’” afterwards than before. There is no agony like bearing an untold story inside you.”

Zora Neale Hurston

“If a man is not faithful to his own individuality, he cannot be loyal to anything.”

Claude McKay

“Proclaim the truth and do not be silent through fear.”

Catherine of Siena

“Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offence, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country, and of an act of disloyalty toward the majesty of heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.”

Patrick Henry

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music.”

Aldous Huxley

“We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”

Elie Wiesel

“Don’t let the noise of other’s opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.”

Steve Jobs

“It doesn’t matter what you do...so long as you change something from the way it was before you touched it into something that’s like you after you take your hands away.”

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*

“I am the Lorax, I speak for the trees. I speak for the trees for the trees have no tongues.”

Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*

“Listen to the MUSTN’TS, child,

Listen to the DON’TS

Listen to the SHOULDN’TS

The IMPOSSIBLES, the WON’TS

Listen to the NEVER HAVES

Then listen close to me-

Anything can happen, child,

ANYTHING can be.”

Shel Silverstein, *Where The Sidewalk Ends*

“A man’s character always takes its hue, more or less, from the form and color of things about him.”
Frederick Douglass

“Logic will get you from A to B. Imagine will take you everywhere.”
Albert Einstein

I got the eye of the tiger, a fighter, dancing through the fire
'Cause I am a champion and you're gonna hear me roar
Louder, louder than a lion
'Cause I am a champion and you're gonna hear me roar
Katy Perry

But when you're gone, who remembers your name?
Who keeps your flame?
Who lives?
Who dies?
Who tells your story?
Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton the Musical*

I see it, I want it, I stunt, yellow-bone it
I dream it, I work hard, I grind 'til I own it
Beyonce

For all the ones we leave
And we believe
Our lives become
The stories that we weave
Ahrens & Flaherty, *Once on this Island*

So misunderstood, but what's a World without enigma?
Lil Wayne

I got through that sentence like a subject and a predicate.
Lil Wayne

The soul's escaping, through this hole that is gaping
This world is mine for the taking
Eminem

don't know what your label tellin' you
Or what magic beans they sellin' you
I can flow, you can't though
Example of a cat who's just a modern day Sambo
The High and Mighty

You want to know what I make? I make kids wonder,
I make them question.
I make them criticize.
I make them apologize and mean it.
I make them write.
I make them read, read, read.
I make them spell *definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful*
over and over and over again until they will never misspell
either one of those words again.
I make them show all their work in math
and hide it on their final drafts in English.
Taylor Mali, *What Teachers Make*

But today, voices of old spirit sound
Speak to us in words profound,
Across the years, across the centuries,
Across the oceans, and across the seas.
They say, draw near to one another,
Save your race.
Maya Angelou

Shadows on the wall
Noises down the hall
Life doesn't frighten me at all
I go boo
Make them shoo
I make fun
Way they run
I won't cry
So they fly
I just smile
They go wild
Life doesn't frighten me at all.
Maya Angelou

We will bring change through our voice. Our words can change the world.
Malala Yousafzai

Whatever you want to do, if you do it with all your heart, it will happen.
William Kamkwamba

Something about my voice is like a blanket on a fretful baby, then at times my voice is like Gabriel's trumpet, firing people up, telling them the good news of salvation and the terrible days of slavery.
Ann Turner, *My Name is Truth: The Life of Sojourner Truth*

Clive loved music. It didn't matter what kind. Whether it was a wah wah scat of a jiving trumpet, a sorrowful twang of sad voice, or the belting boom of a gospel singer, little Clive love the way sound thumped and bumped all the way down to his stomach. He loved the way the music made his feet go HIP HIP HOP, HIPITY HOP.
Laban Carrick Hill, *When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop*

There's no story can't be told,
There's no horse that can't be rode,
A no bull can't be stopped
And ain't a disco we can't rock.
DJ Kool Herc

Today, different artists reinterpret the music according to their own sensibilities, and new listeners bring their own tastes and understanding to the music. Ultimately it becomes, like all art, a dialogue between the artist and the audience, a dialogue that is still vital, still fun, and still America's gift to the world.
Walter Dean Myers, *Jazz*

A sultry love song, sassy as a summer day,
goes dancing from my heart and fills my mind with such sweet things to say.
Walter Dean Myers, *Jazz*

"He who wants to persuade should put his trust not in the right argument, but in the right word. The power of sound has always been greater than the power of sense."
Joseph Conrad

"Words have incredible power.
They can make people's hearts soar,
or they can make people's hearts sore."
Dr. Mardy Grothe

Give voice to what you know to be true, and do not be afraid of being disliked or exiled. I think that's the hard work of standing up for what you see.

Eve Ensler

It took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent.

Madeleine Albright

Just be what it is that you are, and that is just fine. You don't have to be what you're not in any way. Live that and live that fully, and that is where you discover ecstasy. You can't really have ecstasy as something other than yourself.

Alice Walker

"We tell some of the best stories to ourselves. Scientists have discovered that the memories we use to form our own life stories are boldly fictionalized. And social psychologists point out that when we meet a friend, our conversation mostly consists of an exchange of gossipy stories. We ask our friend 'What's up?' or 'What's new?' and we begin to narrate our lives to one another, trading tales back and forth over cups of coffee or bottles of beer, unconsciously shaping and embellishing to make the tales hum. And every night, we reconvene with our loved ones at the dinner table to share the small comedies and tragedies of our day."

Jonathan Gottschall

"If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten."

Rudyard Kipling

"Stories make us more alive, more human, more courageous, more loving."

Madeleine L'Engle

"If you wish to influence an individual or a group to embrace a particular value in their daily lives, tell them a compelling story."

Annette Simmons

"After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world."

Phillip Pullman

"The shortest distance between a human being and the truth is a story."

Anthony de Mello

"Storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it."

Hannah Arendt

“People don’t want more information. They are up to their eyeballs in information. They want faith-faith in you, your goals, your success, in the story you tell.”

Annette Simmons

“The story-from Rumpelstiltskin to War and Peace-is one of the basic tools invented by the human mind for the purpose of understanding. There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.”

Ursula K. Le Guin

“Humans simply aren’t moved to action by ‘data dumps,’ dense PowerPoint slides, or spreadsheets packed with figures. People are moved by emotion. The best way to emotionally connect other people to our agenda begins with ‘Once upon a time...’”

Jonathan Gottschall

“We tell ourselves stories in order to live.”

Joan Didion

“Modern storytellers are the descendants of an immense and ancient community of holy people, troubadours, bards, griots, cantadoras, cantors, traveling poets, bums, hags and crazy people.”

Clarissa Pinkola Estés

“Until recently we’ve only been able to speculate about story’s persuasive effects. But over the last several decades psychology has begun a serious study of how story affects the human mind. Results repeatedly show that our attitudes, fears, hopes, and values are strongly influenced by story. In fact, fiction seems to be more effective at changing beliefs than writing that is specifically designed to persuade through argument and evidence.”

Jonathan Gottschall

“Come then, and let us pass a leisure hour in storytelling, and our story shall be the education of our heroes.”

Plato

“Think of story as a mnemonic device for complex ideas.”

Annette Simmons

I consider music to be storytelling, melody and rhythm. A lot of hip-hop has broken music down. There are no instruments and no songwriting. So you’re left with just storytelling and rhythm. And the storytelling can be so braggadocious, you’re just left with rhythm.

Jack White

Storytelling is my currency. It's my only worth. The only thing of value I have in this life is my ability to tell a story, whether in print, orating, writing it down or having people acting it out.

Kevin Smith

The “crossroads of history” turns out to be one of those places that many visit but few recognize, except in hindsight.

Diane McWhorter, *A Dream of Freedom: The Civil Rights*

He took the song with him in his heart everywhere he traveled. The words changed a little. But the spirit stayed the same.

Debbie Levy, *We Shall Overcome: The Story of A Song*

Hundreds of thousands of people -black and white and young and old-joined hands, joined voices, and sang.

Debbie Levy, *We Shall Overcome: The Story of A Song*

She didn't fight for it with her mighty fists, and she didn't stomp for it with her giant boots.

Sojourner spoke the truth, and struggled against injustice with her brave, beautiful words.

Andrea Davis & Brian Pinkney, *Sojourner Truth's Step Stomp Stride*

When she preached, she let her words fly. Free as the highest dove in the sky. free as the sky itself.

Andrea Davis & Brian Pinkney, *Sojourner Truth's Step Stomp Stride*

I'm hearing voices all around

I'm hearing voices calling out

What would they say?

What would it change?

One Republic

The noise of the locust is dry, and it seems not to be rasped or vibrated but urged from him as if through a small orifice by a breath that can never give out. Also there is never one locust but an illusion of at least a thousand. The noise of each locust is pitched in some classic locust range out of which none of them varies more than two full tones: and yet you seem to hear each locust discrete from all the rest... They are all around in every tree, so that the noise seems to come from nowhere and everywhere at once, from the whole shell heaven, shivering in your flesh and teasing your eardrums, the boldest of all the sounds of night.

James Agee, “Knoxville Summer of 1915”

Hip-hop started off in a block that I've never been to
To counter act a struggle that I've never even been through
If I think I understand just because I flow too
That means I'm not keeping it true, nope
-Macklemore

They brought a call
A song
First heard in the villages of
Ghana/Mali/Senegal
Calls and songs and shouts
Heavy hearted tambourine rhythms
Loosed in the hard city
Like a scream torn from the throat
Of an ancient clarinet

A new sound, raucous and sassy
Cascading over the asphalt village
Breaking against the black sky over
1-2-5 Street
Announcing Hallelujah
Riffing past resolution
Walter Dean Meyers, "Harlem: A Poem"

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

Declaration of Independence

"I don't want realism. I want magic! Yes, yes, magic! I try to give that to people. I misrepresent things to them. I don't tell the truth, I tell what ought to be the truth. And it that's sinful, then let me be damned for it!"

Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

"Sing out, Louise!"

Stephen Sondheim, Jule Styne, & Arthur Laurents, *Gypsy the musical*

“Does the way I wear my hair make me a better person?
Does the way I wear my hair make me a better friend?
Does the way I wear my hair determine my integrity?
I am expressing my creativity.”
India Arie, “I Am Not My Hair”

“Be you. Make sure you’re saying something when you’re saying something. It’s important to sound like you, to feel like you, to be like you. Be you.”
Erykah Badu

The corner was our magic, our music, our politics
Fires raised as tribal dances and war cries
Broke out on different corners
Power to the people
Black power
Black is beautiful
Common, “The Corner”

Or try to celebrate February like it's my B-Day
Or eat watermelon, chicken, and Kool-Aid on weekdays
Or jump high enough to get Michael Jordan endorsements
Or watch BET cause urban support is important
So why did I weep when Trayvon Martin was in the street?
Kendrick Lamar, “Blacker the Berry”

“It’s not about what you’ve done, it’s about what you’re doing. It’s not about where you’ve been, it’s about where you going.”
Calvin Harris, “Let’s Go”

“The slaves who were ourselves had known terror intimately, confused sunrise with pain, & accepted indifference as kindness.”
Ntozake Shange, *Sassafrass, Cypress, and Indigo*

“It’s not the voting that’s democracy, it’s the counting.”
Tom Stoppard, *Jumpers*

Because it’s my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies!
Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I
have given you my soul: leave me my name!”
Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*

“Art is the most intense mode of individualism that the world has ever known.”

Oscar Wilde

**“It matters not how straight the gate,
how charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.”**

William Ernest Henley, “Invictus”

**“Life, with its rules, its obligations, and its freedoms, is like a sonnet:
You’re given the form, but you have to write the sonnet yourself.”**

Madeleine L’Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time*

“Have you ever heard the wonderful silence just before the dawn? Or the quiet and calm just as a storm ends? Or perhaps you know the silence when you haven't the answer to a question you've been asked, or the hush of a country road at night, or the expectant pause of a room full of people when someone is just about to speak, or, most beautiful of all, the moment after the door closes and you're alone in the whole house? Each one is different, you know, and all very beautiful if you listen carefully.”

Norton Juster, *The Phantom Tollbooth*

“Man, sometimes it takes you a long time to sound like yourself.”

Miles Davis